DEMOCRATIC
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MAKING PARLIAMENT WORK BETTER

Parliament and the other elected bodies in the German Democratic Republic must be made to function better. This is one of the most urgent tasks confronting the Republic today, Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl told the Third Party Conference of the Socialist Unity Party held in Berlin in the last week of March.

The central parliament, the People's Chamber, and all the various district, town and village councils had already become powerful organs of democracy, and the best workers, peasants and intellectuals were working in these bodies, but their work was still too stiff and formal, Prime Minister Grotewohl stated.

He quoted statistics to show the broad basis of the present elected bodies: of a total of 13,503 town and district councillors, 8399 were workers, 991 were peasants, 846 craftsmen and 165 intellectuals. Despite this broad basis, the work of these bodies was still unsatisfactory.

"The working style of these bodies is too formal, too cut-and-dried", Herr Grotewohl stated. "This is naturally due to the fact that most of the subjects being discussed have been clarified and decided upon at previous talks. This is naturally easy and agreeable for the bodies responsible for carrying out the decisions taken, but this anaemic sort of proceeding does not satisfy our citizens; they do not feel they are being addressed; they are not being moved. If they are going to give their full cooperation then they must be reached by the pros and cons and cons of the subjects and problems.

"I should like to give a small example of what I am driving at. I was not able to be present at the last session of the People's Chamber, and was therefore obliged to read the shorthand report later, and from this I noted that members of the People's Chamber had dealt in detail with questions of factory safety and industrial accidents: but the members of the cabinet who attended the session had made no attempt to answer the questions raised."

"This is no good, and it must be changed. Lively parliamentary work is the very basis for broadening our democracy; and we are interested not only in broadening democracy but also in deepening it."

(cont. on next page)

PEACE COMES FIRST

Peace can be maintained even without the reunification of Germany, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchov stated in Moscow on April 3rd.

Mr Khrushchov, who was commenting on a recent interview given by French Premier Mollet stated:

"It is very interesting to see how Guy Mollet presented the German problem. Mollet now takes the position that Molotov supported in Geneva: the question of peace, that is disarmament, now takes first place. After that it will be easier to solve the German question and other questions. Peace is possible even without German reunification. Peace must be assured above all. We have repeatedly defined our position on the solution of the German problem: the German problem must be solved by the Germans themselves."

"Swedish Style" Kitchens Planned

East German architects must learn from their Swedish and American colleagues how to plan better and more efficient kitchens, Professor Hermann Henselmann, Berlin's Chief Architect, stated in the East Berlin newspaper "Neues Deutschland" on March 24th.

"We must reach international standards in the equipping of kitchens in the new houses we build" Professor Henselmann stated. "Anyone who looks at the kitchens being built in Sweden and America, for instance, will notice many labour-saving features which would certainly be welcomed by our housewives."

(Foreign visitors to Germany, both East and West, often remark upon the fact that the kitchens provided, even in newly built houses, are twenty or thirty years out of date by usual Scandinavian, British, or American standards.)

Professor Henselmann made his suggestion as a minor point in the plans for a big new "garden block" of workers' dwellings in East Berlin. The block will be built south of the Stalin Allee, in a former slum area almost totally devastated by bombing during the war. The big new development will consist of apartments for about 5000 people, complete with school, cinema, restaurant, shopping centre and other facilities.

The development area, looking well ahead, will provide garage accomodation for over 500 cars, and each block of apartments will be surrounded by gardens.

The work of clearing the area of rubble is already in full swing, and it is planned to have one quarter of the houses up by the end of this year.

MAKING PARLIAMENT WORK BETTER

(cont. from preceding page)

Turning to another aspect of the same problem, Prime Minister Grotewohl discussed the right of all citizens to submit suggestions, criticism and complaints to all governmental bodies. "These suggestions, criticisms and complaints are an important form of the cooperation of the citizens in the work of government, and they help us greatly to improve the work of state and economic organs. Although this matter was clearly dealt with in the Decree of February 6th 1953, not all government bodies pay proper attention to such applications. We therefore propose that the Party Conference should recommend that the People's Chamber pass new legislation on this subject."

The Party Conference appointed a special commission to work out proposals on the best way to broaden the basis of democracy. The commission's report, approved by the conference in its final session, made detailed proposals on the legislative steps which should be taken towards this end. The proposals, which will now be submitted to the People's Chamber for action, included a thorough revision of the Local Government Law passed in 1946 and now outdated, provisions that all elected representatives to local councils should report back to their electors at quarterly intervals, and provisions for the replacement of all elected representatives who did not do their responsible work adequately.

In his speech to the Party Conference Prime Minister Grotewohl also dealt with many other problems affecting government and everyday life. Here are some of the main points which he made:

Church Problems

"Our state of workers and peasants extends particular protection to the unhindered exercise of religion. The supporters of the church enjoy all civil rights. No limits are put on religious practices in the church. The state does not intervene in the internal affairs of the church, just as it does not interfere in the internal affairs of other associations.

"It is, however, necessary to clear up some points in this connection. The activities of the church must be within the bounds of the laws of our state. Our constitution states that religious bodies have the right to express their opinion on vital questions affecting our people. This clause must not be understood as allowing church circles to intervene in a high-handed and negative spirit in the internal affairs of our state. At conferences of the church leadership, for example, measures have been agreed upon to keep clergy and Christian citizens away from plebiscites and elections. Evangelical bishops have addressed letters to government-employed teachers calling upon them not to obey instructions given by the state. The leadership of one provincial church called on Christian parents not to take part in the election of parents' councils in the schools.

"The clauses of our constitution have been misused by some church leaders to give support to the anti-peace policy of the NATO powers ... We know that the great majority of the members of the religious communities give their active support to the peace policy of the German Democratic Republic. We are convinced that we can reach better relations with the church leadership in the German Democratic Republic if this leadership does its part to respect the laws and interests of our state."

The Rule of Law

"We must insist upon the most exact compliance with our laws, since experience has shown that the slightest deviation from the rule of law is exploited by the enemies of our state. Nobody must be permitted to act arbitrarily. Daily practice has shown that the rule of law has not always been maintained. A short time ago, for example, the technical director of a Berlin factory was unjustly arrested, and held in prison for three weeks, during which period he was only once examined. Only after a thorough investigation was he rehabilitated, and those responsible for his unjust arrest were given exemplary punishment.

"The attorney general must insist, more than he has done hitherto, that laws are strictly complied with, particularly with regard to the rights of citizens."

"Manchester Guardian" on Five Year Plan

On March 27th the "Manchester Guardian" reviewed the details of the new Five Year Plan of the German Democratic Republic which had been announced at the Party Conference of the Socialist Unity Party. Here are some of the comments which this paper made:

"On Saturday Herr Ulbricht went much farther on material advantages. The proposed production of 40 per cent more consumer goods, the raising of rates of pay, the reduction of working hours, the provision of better entertainment, and the abolition of food rationing during the period of the second five-year plan — all of this sounds very fine in theory and there is no reason why much of it should not happen.

"For East Germany has virtually completed the reparations payments to the Soviet Union, which, in one form and another, have been a crippling burden on its economy. (The M. G. errs here: all reparations payments to the Soviet Union ceased on January 1st 1954, ed., DGR.) Living conditions have improved slightly and the signs are that the East German Army will be kept comparatively small and therefore comparatively cheap, partly as an argument against all-out West German rearmament and partly in order not to absorb too much manpower.

"But assuming that a 'new policy' is being introduced for the second time into Eastern Germany, what is the real purpose behind it? The answer seems to be plain. Russian policy is to make Eastern Germany a more interested partner and a fully entitled negotiator with the Federal Republic. In this way it may be possible to initiate the all-German talks which could lead to the reunification of a neutral Germany committed in advance to keeping clear of any military alliance ... With France involved in North Africa, Britain increasingly aware of how much the maintenance of an army on German soil will cost, and the United States toying with ideas of peripheral defence, this Russian policy could succeed."

BRITISH M. P.s TAKE A LOOK

"Keep Your Socialised Factories" They Say

The East German people must see to it that they keep their socialised factories and other social achievements when Germany is reunited, British Labour M.P.s who had been visiting the German Democratic Republic told a press conference in East Berlin on April 8th.

The Labour M.P.s. had just concluded a five-day trip through the Republic, during which they visited factories, pits, schools, theatres and flats which they selected at random in various cities.

The M.P.s, who all stated that they were greatly impressed by the economic and social progress made in the Democratic Republic were Frank Allaun (Salford), Sid Irving (Dartford), Arthur Lewis (West Ham), Maurice Orbach (Willesden), and Will Owen (Morpeth).

Mr Orbach told journalists: "We are of the opinion that the people of East germany are entitled to defend their achievements, in particular the nationally-owned enterprises, the cooperative movement and the social institutions." Mr Owen added: "It would be treason to the cause of the working class if they were to give up these things. Perhaps they may have to make some concessions, but they must on no account give up what they have won."

Mr Owen declared: "Our main impression is of the economic progress which has been made in the past ten years. At the same time I am well aware of the difficulties which still face you. I believe that for the further development of the Republic there must be greater mechanisation of mining and agriculture."

Mr Owen, himself a former miner, had been particularly interested in going down the "Martin Hoop" mine at Zwickau. "A miner is a miner the world over, whatever his colour, creed or politics. I got the impression that the miners here were doing all they could to help solve the economic problems of the Republic."

Turning to the problem of German reunification, Mr Owen said that this was a problem which the German people themselves would have to solve. "We are satisfied that the German people will eventually come together" he said.

All the M.P.s ridiculed the threats uttered by the West German authorities that "reprisals" would be taken against governments which recognised the German Democratic Republic. Mr Owen stated: "I regard such a threat as a restriction on the liberty of other governments." Mr Orbach added: "West Germany was unable to do anything about the Soviet Union recognising the German Democratic Republic. The whole thing is like Chiang Kai-shek refusing to recognise Britain because Britain recognises the Chinese People's Republic."

Mr. Orbach told journalists that during his stay he had met one woman who had nothing good to say about the Democratic Republic. She was the owner of a small boarding house, and was full of grumbles about conditions. "What she said may or may not be true" Mr Orbach stated. "What impressed me however was the fact that she was not afraid to say exactly what she thought in front of our interpreters. I shall tell people in England that people here are perfectly free to express their opinions."

Mr Orbach said that he had also been greatly impressed by the pride with which a hospital patient had explained to him that his family was being well looked after during his illness, and were receiving practically his full pay during the period he was in hospital. He added the criticism that people in Democratic Germany did not know enough about the National Health Insurance scheme in Britain, which had been introduced by the Labour Government.

He said that he felt that relations between Britain and East Germany could and should be extended, particularly in the cultural field. "There are many possibilities, which I do not think are always properly understood here. For instance East Berlin has one of Europe's best theatre groups — Bertolt Brecht's Berliner Ensemble. I do not think this is quite realised here. I should like to see the Ensemble in Britain."

Mr Lewis said that even a short visit had been long enough to show him that it was quite obvious that there were enough goods in the shops, and that people had money to buy them. He had been impressed by the fact that people were buying washing machines, refrigerators and television sets.

The M.P.s stated that they were returning to Britain with the conviction that the people of the German Democratic Republic sincerely wanted lasting peace.

"LET'S GET TOGETHER"

Socialists, Communists Must Cooperate

All sections of the working class movement in both parts of Germany must get together to stop reaction and to pave the way for the reunification of Germany. This was one of the main political themes emphasized again and again by speakers at the Third Party Conference of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, held in East Berlin during the last week in March.

The appeal for a joint effort to achieve a better Germany was summed up by Professor Albert Norden, noted historian and Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party, speaking on March 28th. He stated:

"We say to the Social Democrats in West Germany: Let us place in the background those things which separate us, and place in the foreground those things which unite us. These questions in the foreground are the fundamental questions on which the very existence of Germany depends.

"We are opposed to the arms profiteers, and for peace. You, our Social Democratic comrades, are also against the cannon kings and for peace.

"We fight, today as in the past, against fascism. You, our Social Democratic comrades, are also against fascism.

"We are opposed to capitalism and have broken the rule of finance capital. You too, Social Democratic and trade union colleagues, hate finance capital, because you are its victims.

"The German working class in East and West can and must find the strength to draw lessons from history, so that a situation does not arise again as in 1933, for which we all, Communists and Social Democrats, had to pay so dearly.

"The task today is first of all to press back the reactionary forces inimical to the workers and to peace, and thereby to achieve the unity of Germany.

"Today in West Germany the finance capitalists are trying to smash the democratic efforts aimed at reaching an understanding with the German Democratic Republic, at more rights for the workers, at friendship with the Soviet Union . . .

"Every step which is taken in West Germany today to restore and to guarantee democratic conditions is at

the same time a step towards peace and national rapprochement.

"There are of course some Social Democratic leaders who say: 'We can only be successful if we isolate ourselves from the Socialist Unity Party and the Communists, or if we fight them.' This is an old old story. Social Democrats have been told this story since the end of the First World War. And what has always been the result? The more sharply the Social Democratic leaders drew the line against their class brothers on the left, the better the reactionaries liked it. The reactionaries have been the only people who have profited from the fight of the Social Democratic leaders against the Communists in the past forty years . . .

"Our proposal to the West German Social Democrats and the West German trade unionists is that the working class of the whole of Germany should march as a united band against the forces of the right, against the reactionaries . . . We do not regard the Social Democrats as our enemies, but as our class brothers, with whom we seek a lasting friendship, today during the struggle and tomorrow after the victory . . .

"We are convinced that when the Social Democrats and the Communists get together round the conference table many of the factors which keep us apart today will seem very insignificant compared with the factors which unite us."

The question of close cooperation with the Social Democrats was also dealt with by First Secretary Walter Ulbricht in his report to the Party Conference on March 24th. Speaking in the name of the Central Committee Ulbricht declared that the Socialist Unity Party would give its support to all measures taken by members and officials of the Social Democratic Party to oppose remilitarisation and refascisation, and for the improvement in the conditions of the West German workers. The Socialist Unity Party was ready and willing to have discussions with the Social Democratic Party on ways and means to attain these objects.

"We are ready to do everything in our power to bring the Social Democratic Party and the Socialist Unity Party nearer to each other", Walter Ulbricht stated.

A FACTORY HERE — AND A FACTORY THERE

By Professor Albert Norden

The nationally owned Leuna Chemical Works in East Germany and the Badische Aniline and Soda Factory in Ludwigshafen, West Germany, both formerly belonging to the IG Farben Trust, are the two biggest chemical works in Germany, each employing about 30,000 workers.

The Badische Aniline Factory has a share capital of over half a million marks. It is the biggest capitalist joint stock company in West Germany and the main IG Farben concern today.

The Leuna Works, on the other hand, is run by workers and technical experts. No monopoly capitalist has anything to say here, for the management board is made up of the workers themselves, who own their works. Leuna belongs the the people and is managed by representatives of the people in their interests.

The Badische Aniline Factory, as a part of the IG Farben Trust, has a great deal of influence on West German politics.

Leuna also has considerable influence on East German politics, but how does this work out in practice?

IG Farben directors Abs and Pferdmenges are two of Adenauer's closest advisers and the IG Farben Trust has representatives right in the Federal Ministry of Economics. Euler and Preiss, former members of the Free German Party who have recently gone over to Adenauer, represent IG Farben interests in the Federal Parliament.

The situation is Leuna is quite different, however. Four Leuna workers are members of the East German People's Chamber; these are turners Erna Krise and Arno Broemme, who is also on the Economic Commission of the People's Chamber; electrician Hans Joachim Winkler, chairman of the Leuna Trade Union Committee; and chemist Dr. Werner Heidinger, also a member of the Economic Commission. Seventy-two Leuna workers are elected members of the district parliament of Merseburg and the local councils. So our workers also make our laws and are truly in control.

During the past year, worker's meetings in the Ludwigshafen works have been forbidden, so that the workers do not even hear anything of the production plan, let alone exercising any influence on it.

But in Leuna 1600 meetings were held during the past months, at which the 1956 production plan for Leuna was discussed in every smallest detail.

In Ludwigshafen the workers have no influence whatever on the distribution of profits, which go to shareholders.

In Leuna, on the other hand, 8.7 million marks in 1954 and nearly 9.2 million marks in 1955 were allocated from profits for social and cultural purposes, premiums etc. in accordance with suggestions made by the workers themselves.

The IG Farben Trust dismisses shop stewards and other trade union official without notice.

But in Leuna the works management has the obligation to carry out proposals made by workers in production meetings. Hundreds of Leuna workers are members of the work, wages and disputes commissions and ten per cent of all workers take part in social and cultural work and are active in the labour safety commissions.

Here in the German Democratic Republic it is the accepted thing for workers to help work out production plans and for works managers to report back to the workers at regular intervals. The workers are themselves responsible for the carrying out of labour laws and of the production plan. As in all our concerns, it is the accepted practice for Leuna workers themselves, through their trade union, to run their own social and cultural institutions, clubs, libraries etc., which are financed from the profits made by their own work. As owners of their concern, workers decide on the extent of production and on the distribution of profits.

5,272 Leuna workers spent their holidays in trade union holiday homes in 1954, at a cost of 30 marks per person for 14 days. Last year the number rose to 8,513 — one third of all Leuna workers.

(From a speech to the Party Conference of the Socialist Unity Party)

Notice

Owing to staff holiday arrangements, there will be a longer gap before readers receive the next copy of GERMAN REPORT. The next issue will appear early in May.

The Figures You Have Been Waiting For

Production in Tons, Not Percentages

On this page we present our readers for the first time with hard facts, expressed in tons and not in percentages, showing the enormous increase in industrial and agricultural production in the German Democratic Republic in the past five years, and the increases planned for the next five years.

The first column of figures shows how much was actually produced in 1950; the second column shows the plan targets for 1955, the end of the First Five Year Plan; the third column shows the actual production in 1955; and the fourth column shows the plan targets for 1960, the end of the Second Five Year Plan.

A comparison between the second and third columns of figures will show that in many cases the plan targets for 1955 were greatly exceeded, and that in other cases actual production lagged behind the goal set. It must be recalled that in 1950 the German Democratic Republic was only just beginning to build a planned economy, and had little experience in long range planning. As a result some target figures were set impossibly high (in the case of meat production, for instance) and could not be reached. In other cases increasing cooperation with the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies, together with growing trade with western countries, made it possible to import certain products more economically than they could be produced in the Republic, and target figures were therefore revised during the course of the plan period. Even in cases where plan targets were not met, however, it will be noted that production was far above the 1950 figure.

In those cases where no production figures are given for 1950, it is generally due to the fact that production was negligible or non-existent in that year. In other cases the statistics for the different years are not comparable since they are expressed in one case in units and in the other in tons.

Product	1950 (Actual production)	1955 (Planned production)	1955 (Actual production)	1960 (Planned production)
Electrical power (million KwH)	17,800	31,600	28,750	44,000
Lignite (million tons)	132	205	200	260
Liquid fuel (thousand tons)	845	1,355	1,575	2,285
Pig iron (thousand tons)	335	1,250	1,520	2,250
Ingot steel (thousand tons)	961	3,000	2,500	3,500
Rolling steel (thousand tons)	735	2,200	1,911	2,600
Aluminium (thousand tons)	+	+	26	65
Potash (thousand tons)	1,250	2,000	1,571	2,200
Sulphuric acid anhydride (thousand tons)	256	400	483	725
Caustic soda (thousand tons)	147	250	255	350
Sodium carbonate (thousand tons)	102	380	459	730
Nitrogen fertiliser (thousand tons)	208	235	293	335
Phosphorous fertiliser (thousand tons)	48	93	80	200
Synthetic rubber (thousand tons)	37	60	70	100
Motor tyres (thousand units)	450	900	1,475	2,950
Synthetic threads, perlon etc. (tons)	+	+	3,400	15,600
Cement (thousand tons)	1,354	2,600	2,950	5,200
Rolling mill equipment (thousand tons)	+	+	24	60
Lathes etc. (thousand tons)	+	+	29	67
Chipless forming machines (thousand tons)	+	+	39	86
Wool textiles (million square metres)	+	+	32	58
Cotton textiles (million square metres)	+	+	266	395
Leather shoes (million pairs)	8	21	17	22
Motor Cycles (thousand units)	+	+	87	525
TV receivers (thousand units)	+	+	38	350
Refrigerators (thousand units)	+	+	20	110
Meat (thousand tons)	211	924	565	701
Vegetable oil (thousand tons)	44	88	110	140
Butter (thousand tons)	58	100	127	163
Margarine (thousand tons)	+	+	182	226

(The statistics on this page are based on the following sources: "Protokoll des III Parteitags der SED", Dietz Verlag Berlin 1951; and "Neues Deutschland", Berlin. April 1st 1956.)

PROPOSALS & CRITICISMS

Points from Speeches at the Party Conference of the Socialist Unity Party

(On this page we give readers a few short extracts from the speeches and discussion at the Party Conference of the Socialist Unity Party held in Berlin in the last week of March. This short summary does not attempt to sum up the proceedings, but only to give readers some idea of the problems, criticisms and suggestions made by speakers.)

HEAVY INDUSTRY

Fritz Selbmann, Deputy Prime Minister:

"We need not take steps to increase the mining of low-grade iron-ore in our Republic, since the Soviet Union has agreed to supply us with more high-grade ore... We must thoroughly re-equip our machine tool factories, since at present we are turning out the most modern machine tools in factories which themselves are absolutely out of date... By 1975 we must produce a considerable part of our electric power by atomic methods, because by then our coal reserves will be running out."

WORKING WOMEN

Agnes Steinke, textile worker:

"Nothing like enough has been done yet to help working women. The local authorities have not yet been able to make the shops keep open until 7 p.m. How can working women go to work in the late shift if the day nurseries shut at 6 p.m. or even 5 p.m.? We want to help build Socialism, and we have no understanding for such methods."

PEASANT COOPERATORS

Kurt Braun, chairman of an agricultural production cooperative:

"The income of the members of our cooperative is already higher than that of individual middle peasants. Our peasant cooperators make trips to the nearest theatre, we have organised excursions, many of our members spend their holidays in trade union holiday homes."

BUREAUCRATS

Franz Bandel, Director of the Hettstedt Rolling Mill:

"We must step-up our struggle against bureaucracy, and aim to limit the expansion of administrative staff. In the Hettstedt rolling mill 9.5 % of the employees are office employees: in most nationally-owned factories the proportion of office workers is even higher. I must say I have a bad conscience about it, because under capitalism I don't think there would be more than 8 %. I believe that in the nationally-owned factories we should limit the proportion of office employees to between 6 % and 12 %, depending on the complications of the production programme. We must not only produce better and more cheaply than capitalism: we must also administer and distribute more cheaply."

DOGMATISM

Willi Bredel, novelist, former dock worker:

"One of the greatest efforts which our Party has made to raise the level of Socialist consciousness of our members has been the organised study of Marxism-Leninism. The task began with great enthusiasm, but as a result of schematic and dogmatic methods it has often become a formal duty, without any inner enthusiasm. Whole chapters of theoretical works are read to pupils sitting there out of a sense of duty with sour faces, and the brightest among them learn these chapters by rote. I declare here openly and honestly that I regret that I have been silent for so long on this subject, and that I have put up with something which should not have been tolerated... Now we must do everything to interest our younger comrades in theoretical studies and scientific work, to help them to develop themselves."

ROLLER SKATES

Curt Wach, Minister of Trade and Supply:

"We must take measures to end the unplanned production of consumer goods by many different factories simultaneously. A number of factories have begun, independently of each other, to turn out carpet sweepers: if this goes on we shall soon have more carpet sweepers in the German Democratic Republic than we have carpets. A recent survey we made showed that so many factories were turning out roller skates that we can now meet the demand for the next eight years."

MEDICINE

Dr Eva Schmidt-Kolmar, Medical Faculty, Karl Marx University, Leipzig:

"In some theoretical fields our medical research has lagged seriously behind international standards. In the field of physiology, for instance, the Soviet Union has taken the lead. In other fields the USA, Britain and France have outdistanced us. If we want to regain international standards, then we must wage an energetic struggle against the lack of interest in theory on the part of many doctors and scientists."

SCHOOLS

Werner Neugebauer, member of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party:

"Plans have now been completed for speeding up the introduction of the middle schools (schools for 6-year olds to 16-year-olds, ed.). The rapid development of our economy will make this possible. By the end of the Second Five Year Plan (1960), 40 % of all pupils will get education up to the age of 16, and by 1965 there will be a general school-leaving age of 16. During the Second Five Year Plan the middle schools will mainly be introduced in towns with important industries, and during the same period middle schools will become the rule in all 605 villages where a tractor station is located."

TECHNICIANS

Hans Bigalke, Socialist Unity Party Secretary in the West Iron Combine:

"The complicated tasks set us by the Second Five Year Plan make it necessary for responsible members of our party to increase their technical qualifications, in addition to their political qualifications. Of the 14 members of our party leadership in our works, seven are at present engaged in technical studies. Three are studying engineering, two are training as skilled workers, and two are studying in our factory technical school preliminary to taking engineering training."

YOUNG PEOPLE

Karl Namokel, First Secretary of the Central Board of the Free German Youth:

"Quite a lot of people say today that the young people are not interested in politics. The facts show, however, that this is not the case. Young people do not reject the important questions of politics, economics and culture; what they do reject are the boredom and dryness which often characterised the political work of the Free German Youth. The decisive fact was that we had not satisfied the demand of the young people for an answer to all their questions, for really lively arguments. All this must be changed."

"Daily Herald" Looks at East Germany

Across Europe the ice-hard barriers of the Cold War are breaking down. And beyond them there are new things to be seen. My reasons for knowing this were gathered during a journey of a thousand miles through the German Democratic Republic, that eastern part of Germany where about 17 million Germans are building up, under Communist direction, another kind of Germany . . .

Nearly nine years have passed since I last toured East Germany. Then the scars of war were far from healed.

East Germany is still a rather grey and cheerless place, though partly because the climate makes it so. It fails to glitter.

If many of the necessities of life — basic foods and rents, for instance, are cheaper than in West Germany, material luxuries are dear and often hard to find.

In East Berlin's new "grand boulevard" — the imposing two-mile-long Stalin avenue completed a couple of years ago — I saw some of the worst architecture in modern Europe. Technical efficiency, I found, is sometimes low.

Skilled workers continue to flow into West Germany. In the East, overtime is illegal, and overall earnings are therefore limited. These workers' general attitude seems to be that "so long as the West German boom goes on, we'll make more money over there. When it busts we'll come back here again."

Last year the West German Government said that about 267,000 people came to them from Eastern Germany. But the flow also runs the other way. Last year the East German Government said that about 140,000 people arrived from Western Germany.

Eastern Germany, I find, is by no means the place of hunger and fear that some of our cold-war beavers have said it was.

Wage-earning people, on the contrary, have more job security, more social welfare, far better educational opportunities for themselves and their children, and more hope for the future than they can expect in the West.

Nine years ago the once enchanting city of Dresden lay cold and dead amid terrible ruins. Last week I drove through a city that is gradually coming to life again.

They have cleared away hundreds of thousands of tons of rubble. They have built some 7,000 new homes, rehabilitated as many more. They have full employment, and prices are falling.

At Dresden's famous technical university, Director Schmitt showed me magnificent new student quarters. From about 1,000 students before the war, this university has expanded to 12,000 students today.

I talked to a few of them. About 75 percent are the children of workers and peasants; and about the same proportion are fully paid for by the State during courses of from three to six years.

The Communist government has concentrated on providing a better life for young people. In the new steel town of Stalinstadt, the average age of a population of 14,000, I was told, is only 27. I found many big jobs filled by men and women under 30.

In Leipzig, Professor Budzislawski — once editor of the famous pacifist "Weltbuehne" — told me that the university there has exactly twice as many students as 20 years ago. He said there are more students in Eastern Germany now than in the whole of Germany before the war.

I rang bells at a new block of flats in Leipzig. I compared what the people told me they paid in rents with what they told me they earned; the results — here as elsewhere — show that rents in Eastern Germany range from a tenth to a twentieth of weekly wages.

On one of these visits, a short, swarthy man answered the bell. I told him what I wanted, and he asked me in for a drink. He was Juan Garcia, an old Spanish Republican fighter who now, after years of exile and imprisonment in Hitler's camps, and hardships after 1945, has at last come to rest in ease and comfort.

His flat is luxurious. Its rent anywhere in London could not be less than 300 pounds a year. But he pays 61 marks (about 5 pounds) a month for it; as a fitter working no overtime he earns 700 marks (about 58 pounds) a month. I chose Juan's bell at random.

Most people cannot yet hope to live so well. A vast amount of rebuilding remains to be done.

"But our worst difficulties are over," a leading Communist official told me. "One more five-year plan, and we shall be able to provide some of the comforts of life as well as the necessities."

To back this claim, East Germans point to the new industries they are building. I saw some of them.

At a new pig-iron plant near Magdeburg, Works Manager Schilling told me they produce 250,000 tons of pig-iron a year, using low-quality iron ore and coke from low-calorific lignite, both hitherto believed useless. He said no other country had done this.

I questioned workers about wages and conditions. These are fixed once a year by collective agreements between trade unions, management and State authorities. Many told me the level of real wages is steadily climbing; and what I saw confirmed this.

"We have had 16 all-round price reductions in the Republic since 1951", said Works Manager Schilling.

Few workers have less than 16 days annual holiday with pay. Those in responsible smelting and foundry jobs have 24 days. The plant maintains holiday homes in the mountains of Thuringia. It has a superb clinic with three doctors in permanent attendance.

Women in clerical jobs told me they can have six weeks with full pay before a confinement, and four weeks after. (The correct figures are five weeks before and six weeks after confinement, ed.)

I checked impressive social benefits seen here with questions at other plants. The facts show they really do exist.

On this point, leading Social Democrats whom I consulted in Western Germany told me: "We cannot accept Communist methods. But social achievements over there are a matter of fact."

All this makes a very different kind of Germany. In Eastern Germany they have:

1. Nationalised about four-fifths of all industry;

2. Divided all big landed estates among small-holding peasants;

3. Built a new and much bigger school and university system, with strong emphasis on the training of technicians and scientists;

4. Given wage-earning people social services on a scale far better than anything realised in Western Germany.

I could find no former Nazis in leading positions. The old industrialists and bankers who paid Hitler are gone; and evidently gone for good.

These are great changes. They will weigh heavily in any settlement of the German problem.

(Basil Davidson in the "Daily Herald", London, March 27th 1956)

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

If you started reading this copy of GERMAN REPORT at the front, and did not immediately turn to the back page, as many readers tell me they do, then you will have noticed that a very large part of the issue is devoted to the Party Conference of the Socialist Unity Party, which was held in Berlin at the end of March.

As you will see from the discussions and decisions printed on other pages, this conference had a lot of highly important work to do, and had to take decisions which are likely to affect the future of the whole of Germany, and ultimately of the whole of Europe.

I know perfectly well that building Socialism is a serious business, but as I sat in the press gallery during most of the seven days of discussion, I sometimes wished that the delegates would go about their responsible work in a slightly more light-hearted way. The few speakers who tried to spice their workmanlike speeches with even elementary jokes were amply rewarded by the delegates' laughter.

Good Cracks

But I heard some pretty good cracks in the lobbies during intervals, and I should like to report a short light-hearted exchange between a Yugoslav journalist and one of the German delegates. They were exchanging notes on the socialist planning methods used in their two countries, and the Yugoslav claimed that planning in his country was just as effective, without having to go into the smallest details of production. "For instance, we don't try to lay down the minimum number of gallons of milk which each cow should supply" the Yugoslav said. "But our cows are Prussian", the German replied with a grin. "That means they are well disciplined."

(To prevent any possible confusion, I should perhaps explain that even the disciplined cows of Democratic Germany are not set production norms; the fixing of target figures of average gallons-per-cow in planning is simply part of the drive to increase production by better breeding, better fodder and so on.)

Another lobby incident which I noted took place in front of a new-model air-compression machine which was on exhibit there. One of the delegates came up, took a good look, sighed, and said: "When do you think the engineers are going to produce a speech-compression machine?"

And I think he had in fact put his finger on the right spot. After sitting through most of the conference, I ask myself seriously whether mammoth speeches are really the best way which we can find to popularise the building of Socialism.

Splitting up these mammoth speeches into more manageable segments would be one way of improving such a conference. Another very important step would be the improvement of the level of debate. This is something which is obviously occupying the attention of leading members of the Socialist Unity Party. Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl, for instance, in his speech reported on another page of this issue, raised just this question with regard to the debates and discussions in the People's Chamber and the local councils. "The working style of these bodies is too formal, too cut-and-dried. This is naturally due to the fact that most of the subjects being discussed have been clarified and decided upon at previous talks... but this anaemic sort of proceeding does not satisfy our citizens ;they do not feel that they are being addressed: they are not being moved. If they are going to give their full cooperation then they must be reached by the pros and cons of the subjects and problems."

And much the same applies to the discussions of the Party Conference. There were a lot of valuable speeches, criticisms and suggestions: the conference did a lot of work and took some very good decisions which are going to have a big effect on the future shape of things. But the whole thing was, as Otto Grotewohl said, too cut-and-dried and too formal.

Of course it is not really up to me as a foreign observer, accepting the hospitality of the German Democratic Republic, to criticise the way they run their own affairs like this. But I do it because I am so impressed by the great achievements of the last few years here that I should like to see things even better.

Incidentally it is not only here that party conferences are sometimes rather heavy. I notice that Emrys Hughes, Member of Parliament for South Ayrshire, writing in the "Tribune" dated March 23rd, has some pretty critical things to say about Labour Party Conferences in Scotland. He asks: "Ought not a party conference to be bright, interesting, alive, showing clearly that the party is alive too? Is not the last thing we want a dull, mechanical, half-dead conference in which the delegates just listen to the platform speakers, pass stale, platitudinous, agreed-upon resolutions and go away feeling that they have heard nothing new or inspiring...?"

Now I am glad to say that the Party Conference of the Socialist Unity Party was by no means as bad as that. The Socialist Unity Party is certainly alive, and delegates to the conference certainly came away feeling they had heard plenty which was new and inspiring; but some of Emrys Hughes' criticisms could well be applied to this conference in Berlin too.

Anti-Fascist Colonel

Among the delegates to the Party Conference were a number of members of the newly-formed People's Army of the German Democratic Republic. During one of the pauses, a foreign correspondent attending the conference asked me what sort of men the officers of the new army were. A middle-aged man in officer's uniform was standing near, so we went up and interviewed him.

He told us he was 42 years old, son of a miner, and that he had started working as a bricklayer at the age of 14. He soon joined the Socialist movement, and worked in the anti-Hitler underground after the nazis came to power in 1933.

From 1936 to 1939 he fought against fascism in Spain in the ranks of the International Brigade. Then followed more than four years in French and German concentration camps, until he managed to escape and join the partisans in Greece and later in Albania.

After the end of the war he returned to Germany, and helped to organise the People's Police in East Germany. Now he has joined the People's Army because, as he put it "we have all got to be ready to defend the socialism which we are building here."

Today this former bricklayer, with his remarkable record of anti-fascist struggle, is Colonel Kurt Lohberger in the People's Army of the German Democratic Republic.

I think my foreign colleague was very much impressed by the remarkable contrast between the biography of Colonel Lohberger and the biographies of the old nazis who fill every single senior post in the West German Wehrmacht.

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